

Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation

Enterprise Zone Council

Minutes of Meeting of March 25, 2014

Commerce RI: Narragansett Room

315 Iron Horse Way, Suite 101

Providence, RI 02908

In attendance:

COUNCIL AFFILIATION

D. Varin Vice Chairman

R. Caniglia Stand Corporation

A. Gibbs Commerce RI

M. Wood RI League of Cities & Towns

OTHER AFFILIATION

V. Barros Commerce RI

M. Godin ED Foundation of RI

L. DiBoni City of Cranston

W. Clark Town of Portsmouth

D. Williamson Town of Bristol

C. Wells Town of Warren

F. Presley Town of West Warwick

J.R Pagliarini Commerce RI

At 10:00 Mr. Varin called the meeting of the Rhode Island Enterprise Zone Council to order and noted that there was a quorum present. He asked for a motion to change the order of the agenda to allow agenda item II be heard first.

Mr. Caniglia made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Gibbs and all voted in favor and the motion was unanimously approved.

The first item of business before the Council on the revised agenda was the zone re-designation request by the town of West Warwick.

Mr. Presley, the town manager, thanked the Council for the opportunity to present his town's request for zone re-designation.

He stated the importance of fully restoring the enterprise zone tax credit and has talked with the town's state delegation about this issue.

He stressed the value of the EZ program to his town which has experienced unemployment higher than the state's unemployment rate. On the positive side he stated that things are starting to turn around, new companies are coming in, new construction is on an uptick and the town is running at about a 2% growth since the beginning of the year.

He talked about projects that the town is working on where being an

EZ designated community is critical including:

- **The redevelopment authority;**
- **The MED Zone; and,**
- **New business activity in the business park development**

Mr. Wood asked if just the Arctic neighborhood is a part of the redevelopment district.

Mr. Presley stated that the district is not only Arctic but parts of Centerville and several mills in close proximity to Arctic but the plan is to expand it into other villages in the town.

Ms. Gibbs talked about her experience meeting with Thundermist Healthcare in West Warwick and how impressed she was with innovation of the Farmer RX program, a farmer's market for patients.

Mr. Caniglia asked if Kent County Water is being more reasonable about the proposed water park project within the industrial park.

Mr. Presley stated that the park recycles 90% of the water and Kent County has preapproved the project.

A general discussion ensued about challenges that the fire code imposes on new business development in the town.

Mr. Varin stated that the proposal was heavy on what the town's

going to do but light on what has happened.

Mr. Presley agreed and assured the Council that under his watch the EZ activity would be well documented, tracked and reported on.

Mr. Wood made a motion to approve the town's re-designation request for a 5 year term. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gibbs. There being no further discussion, all voted in favor and the motion was approved.

The next item of business before the Council on the revised agenda was the zone re-designation request by the towns of Bristol and Warren.

Ms. Williamson, Director of Community Development for the town of Bristol, introduced herself and stated that she agrees with Mr. Presley on restoring the EZ tax credit.

She recapped the major accomplishments in the zone since the last re-designation including:

- o predevelopment work on the industrial portion of the Bristol Industrial Park funded through CDBG;**
- o Metacom Avenue business redevelopment project;**
- o the expansion of Mack Plastics and the renovation; and,**
- o the reuse of the JT Lumber site as contractor incubation space.**

She addressed other support services the town provides businesses

including those for businesses in the EZ.

Next Ms. Wells, the Director of Planning & Community Development from the town of Warren, talked about business activity in the town including:

- o the Hope & Main food services incubator;**
- o Waterrower's business expansion on 17-acres on Metacom Avenue;**
- and,**
- o Comsearch's business/employment growth.**

She also talked about the town's effort and commitment to hire an economic development coordinator, who would function as a point person for business development and help individual businesses navigate the licensing and permitting processes.

Ms. Williamson stressed the importance of the EZ to both towns and asked for the Council's approval for a 5 year re-designation.

Mr. Caniglia asked if the towns work together cohesively.

Both Ms. Williamson and Ms. Wells concurred that they work well together and complement each other's efforts in servicing their respective business communities.

Mr. Caniglia made a motion to grant the re-designation request from the towns for a 5 year term. The motion was seconded by Mr. Woods.

There being no further discussion, all voted in favor and the motion was approved.

Mr. Clark noticed that the re-designation proposals were missing town council resolutions of support and after a lengthy discussion Mr. Wood made a motion to amend both re-designation approvals, making them contingent upon receipt of resolutions of support from all three (3) town councils involved in the re-designation of the West Warwick and Mt. Hope enterprise zones. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gibbs. There being no further discussion, all voted in favor and the motion was approved

The next item of business before the Council was the Meeting Minutes from December 4, 2013

Mr. Woods made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gibbs.

Mr. Caniglia noted that Dennis Langley was listed as being affiliated with Stand Corporation instead of the Urban League.

Mr. Barros made note of the error and would make the correction.

There being no further discussion, all voted in favor and the motion was approved.

The next order of business before the Council was the Recommendation for 2013 Membership

Mr. Barros stated that there was one (1) businesses being presented for 2013 membership. He stated that the businesses had completed a membership application that was reviewed and approved by the local municipality. RIEDC staff also reviewed the application and recommends approval of membership of the business.

Mr. Varin asked for a motion to approve the staff recommendation for membership. Mr. Caniglia made the motion which was seconded by Mr. Gibbs. Mr. Varin asked if there was any further discussion. There being no further discussion, all voted in favor and the motion was unanimously approved.

The next order of business before the Council was a Recommendations for 2013 Certification.

Mr. Barros stated that there were three (3) businesses being presented for 2013 year-end certification; the businesses had declared their status as c-corps and satisfied the requirements of EZ year-end tax certification; as a result, staff recommended approval of all three businesses as presented, bringing the year-to-date total to three (3) businesses resulting in one hundred thirty nine (139) new full-time jobs created last year.

Mr. Varin asked for a motion to approve the 2013 recommendations for certification. Mr. Gibbs made the motion which was seconded by Ms. Woods. Mr. Varin asked if there was any further discussion. There being no further discussion, all voted in favor and the motion was unanimously approved.

The next order of business before the Council was a status update on 2014 EZ related legislation

Mr. Barros provided a detailed reviewing of all the of the enterprise zone related bills listed on the agenda.

Mr. Pagliarini added some valuable perspective on the intricacies of the legislative process as it relates to the enterprise zone bills that were submitted in 2014.

A general discussion ensued about engaging small businesses in the legislative process including testifying on the enterprise zone related bills.

The next order of business before the Council was Other Business.

Mr. Varin asked if there was any other business to come before the Council.

There being none, he asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Wood made

the motion which was seconded by Mr. Caniglia. All voted unanimously in favor of the motion to adjourn.